# ICD
**ORGANIZATION FOR IDENTITY +
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

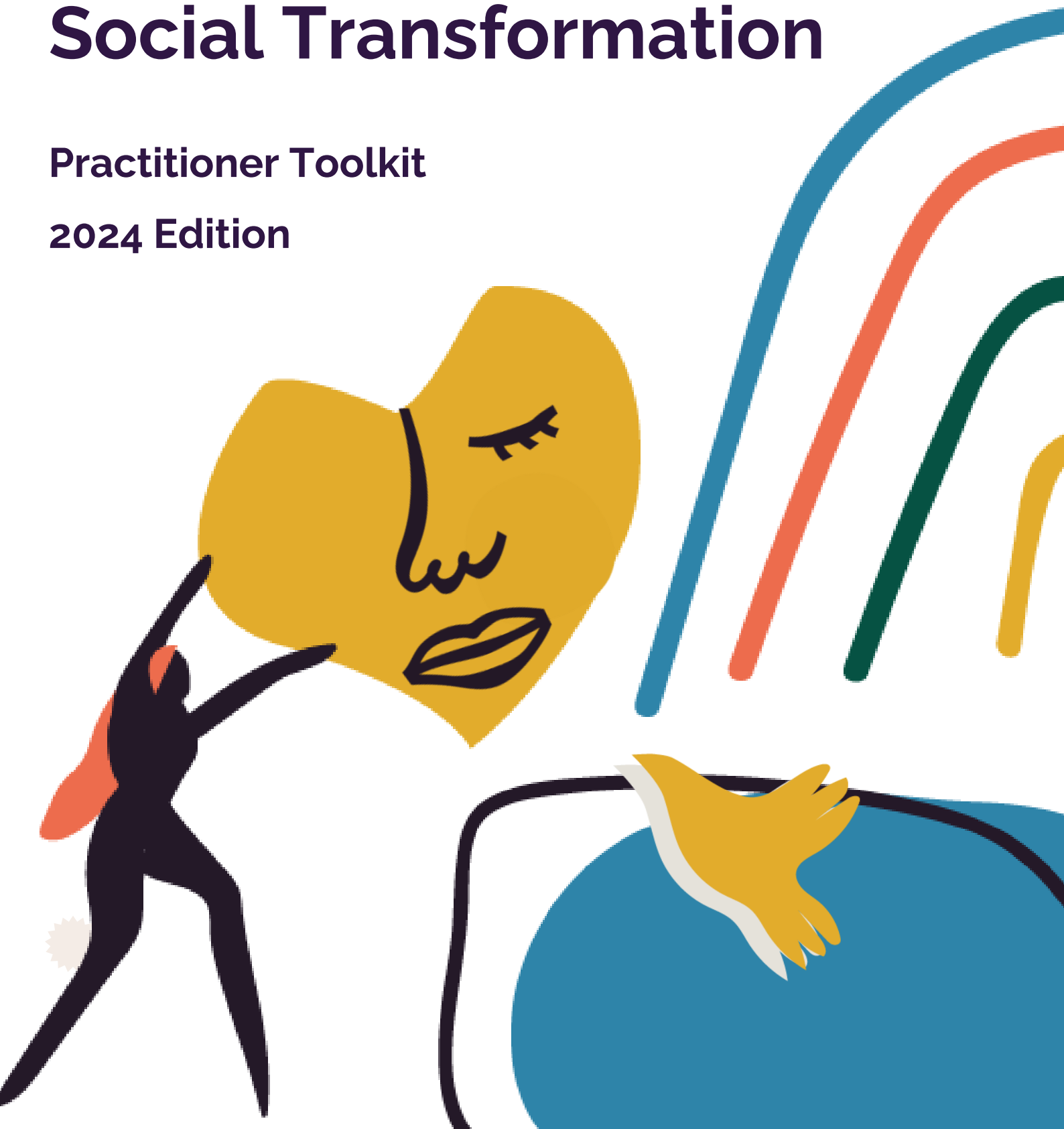# Harnessing the Power of Identity & The Arts for Social Transformation

## Practitioner Toolkit

## 2024 Edition

# A Practitioner's Toolkit

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# 1. Introduction

*"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"*

Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The power of identity and the arts in driving social transformation cannot be underestimated. Identity is a fundamental aspect of who we are as individuals and how we perceive ourselves in relation to the world around us. It shapes our beliefs, values, and sense of belonging. The arts, on the other hand, provide a medium through which we can express and explore our identities, tell stories, and challenge societal norms. When harnessed effectively, the combination of identity and the arts can be a catalyst for positive change, fostering understanding, empathy, and social cohesion.

Identity and the arts have long been recognized as powerful tools for social transformation. The ability to tap into and explore one's identity through artistic expression has the potential to positively impact individuals and communities, fostering cohesion, understanding, and peace. However, it is also important to acknowledge that identity and the arts can be manipulated and weaponized to create division and conflict.

This practitioners' toolkit on the theme of "Identity and Arts for Social Transformation" is a culmination of discussions and reflections from an online workshop organized by the Organization for Identity and Cultural Development (OICD) in collaboration with the UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa. This toolkit aims to delve into the intersection of identity and the arts as a powerful tool for positive social change, showcasing the diverse range of frameworks, methodologies, and approaches discussed during the workshop, in the survey that network participants completed, and in follow-up interviews and discussions with survey respondents.

In the workshop, UNESCO emphasized the timeliness and significance of this conversation in the context of transforming education and building the "Africa We Want" as envisioned in the AU Agenda 2063. The Eastern Africa region, like many others, faces challenges related to political immaturity, ethnic tensions, and social unrest. These challenges underscore the need to critically rethink the foundations of identity and culture, and to leverage the rich diversity of the region as a source of strength and unity.

UNESCO's mandate and commitment to building peace in the minds of individuals and societies aligns with the objective to co-develop the frameworks and tools in this report with a broad range of stakeholders. The organization's work on culture and arts education, intercultural dialogue, and peacebuilding provides a framework for understanding the role of identity and the arts in fostering mutual understanding, respect, and social cohesion.

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UNESCO's various initiatives, such as the General History of Africa, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and the Management of Social Transformations program, contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity, dialogue among civilizations, and the prevention of discrimination and intolerance.

Likewise, the Organization for Identity and Cultural Development (OICD) works to promote identity-based approaches for social transformation in general, as well as a means to protect against and respond to the increasing weaponization of culture and identity worldwide.

The toolkit acknowledges UNESCO emphasis on the importance of languages, particularly Kiswahili, in fostering mutual understanding and social cohesion in Eastern Africa. Tools which work to prioritize African languages in education can assist in emphasizing the role of the General History of Africa in reclaiming a history and identity free from colonial bias. The toolkit also recognizes the power of storytelling, performance, and representation in reaching and transforming identities, as well as the potential for art to challenge stereotypes, bridge divides, and promote dialogue and understanding.

This toolkit aims to curate and share the frameworks, methodologies, and approaches discussed during the workshop and in follow-up discussions, showcasing the diverse range of tools and resources used by organizations in the workshop and wider network. It will highlight good practices, case studies, and recommendations that demonstrate the transformative power of identity and the arts in various development sectors, including conflict transformation, counter-extremism, community development, and social work. The aim is to provide practitioners with practical guidance and inspiration for utilizing the power of identity and the arts for positive social transformation. The toolkit will be provided an online presence to allow it to evolve and new tools to be added.

In conclusion, this toolkit seeks to contribute to UNESCO's mission of fostering peace, sustainable development, and the promotion of cultural diversity. By highlighting the potential of identity and the arts as a catalyst for positive social change, the tools and frameworks within aim to assist practitioners across various sectors to harness the power of art and identity in their work. The OICD and UNESCO hope that this curated collection of frameworks and tools will serve as a valuable resource for practitioners striving to create inclusive, cohesive communities which can withstand the negative manipulation of identity and resulting division, conflict and war.

# 2. Critical Concepts and Frameworks

## 2.1 Issues-Based Art

Issues-based art is a powerful approach that uses art as a means to address and explore social, political, and cultural issues. Unlike traditional forms of art education that focus on skills and self-expression, issues-based art education (IBAE) centers around critical thinking and analysis of themes related to identity and understanding of others.

IBAE encourages participants to uncover, understand, and challenge the languages and narratives that project specific identities onto individuals and communities. It focuses on the subjective and intersubjective aspects of identity, exploring how the self relates to the world. By doing so, IBAE offers an alternative to the dominant convention in arts education, which often objectifies the subject and presents art through the lens of the teacher.

One of the key aspects of IBAE is its emphasis on connecting learning to the unique experiences of all involved. It encourages teachers and educators to incorporate local social issues into their programs of study, using them as starting points for education. This approach allows for learning to be drawn from the local context and connected to national and international themes. Additionally, IBAE promotes empathy and an ethics of care by encouraging participants to form connections between their own life experiences and those of others.

In an IBAE classroom, the traditional teacher-centered approach is transformed into a studio that fosters debate and open exploration of the world. Students become artist researchers, producing works that symbolically embody their research journey. This approach not only addresses socio-political issues but also empowers individuals to see themselves as three-dimensional meaning makers, reflected in the values, purpose, and reasoning of others.

By addressing the problems of the world through art, IBAE offers a pedagogy of hope. It provides a unique insight into the issues being explored and allows individuals to see beyond narrow definitions of national, religious, or cultural identities. IBAE enables agency by offering options for individuals to see themselves as active participants in shaping their present and future.

In conclusion, issues-based art education is a transformative approach that uses art as a tool for addressing social issues and empowering individuals. By encouraging critical thinking, empathy, and a connection to the world, IBAE offers a pedagogy of hope and enables individuals to see themselves as agents of change.

*This summary of IBAE has been adapted from writings by Dr. John Johnston, Principle Investigator ArtEZ UNESCO Project. Read a full work outlining this framework by Dr. Johnston online.

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# TOOLKIT CONCEPT SPOTLIGHT

## Issues-Based Art Education (IBAE)

**Subject-Specific Benefits:**
- Encourages critical thinking about social, political, and cultural issues.
- Promotes self-reflection and exploration of personal identity through artistic expression.
- Fosters empathy by encouraging an understanding of diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Provides a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and represented
- Empowers individuals to challenge dominant narratives and stereotypes through creative expression.

**Community and Collaboration:**
- Connects learning to local social issues, making education relevant and meaningful.
- Cultivates creativity and artistic expression as a means of communication and activism.
- Builds a sense of community and collaboration through shared exploration of issues.

**Pedagogical Impact:**
- Offers a pedagogy of hope by addressing global problems and empowering individuals to be agents of change.
- Enhances critical consciousness and social awareness.
- Develops skills in research, analysis, and communication through artistic expression.

**Interdisciplinary Learning:**
- Encourages interdisciplinary learning by integrating art with other subjects.
- Promotes a deeper understanding of complex global issues and their interconnectedness.

**Dialogue and Action:**
- Provides a safe and inclusive space for dialogue and debate.
- Inspires individuals to take action and make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

## 2.2 Identity or Narrative Agency

Narratives are an integral part of the way we make sense of the world, both as individuals and within society. As collective memory cannot be collectively remembered, social groups develop narratives about the past, which contribute to fostering a sense of identity, but can also be subject to dispute and dissent, turning into a tool to promote conflict and division. For this reason, it is of utmost importance that individuals and social groups understand the process of meaning making, taking ownership of their narratives through a process that grants agency to the subjects' involved in such narratives.

The notion of narrative agency has been used to emphasize the role of narrative self-interpretation in the process that brings about "the integration of the self over time", recognizing that this process is not monolithic, but rather "dynamic, provisional and open to change and revision" (Mackenzie, 2008: 11-12). Narrative agency is about our own ability to understand, explore and navigate our narrative environments, promoting self-awareness and harnessing the power of narrative to interpret and reinterpret stories, meanings, values and traditions that are culturally available to us. It is a critical exercise of (re)articulation, focused on narrative awareness, narrative imagination and narrative dialogicality (Meretoja, 2020; 2023).

The narrative dimension of agency is a constitutive aspect of the ways we "participate, through our actions and inactions, in narrative practices that perpetuate and challenge social structures" (Meretoja, 2018). Narrative agency is part of the same conceptual family as narrative identity which also emphasizes the processual, dynamic and anti-existentialist nature of the construction of self over time. The concept of identity, however, is linked to the question of "who I am", whereas the notion of agency shifts the focus to action, to our ways of acting and affecting the world. Therefore, narrative agency concerns our ability to use, interpret and reinterpret narratives that are culturally available to us. By taking ownership of narratives, individuals become capable to analyze and challenge them, to make choices over how we narrate our lives and relationships, as well as on how we perceive and interact with the world around us.

Narrative agency can contribute to social transformation by means of giving way to the possibility of imagining diversity, choice and difference in terms of thought, affect and action. In this sense, being an agent in the construction, interpretation and reinterpretation of narratives allows for individuals to actively take ownership in the process of peacemaking and building inclusive, diverse and resilient societies.

The production and consumption of narratives is mediated by Art and, of course, storytelling in all its forms. Art itself is thus a key lever in our ability to expand narrative agency in

children and in adults. Using artistic representations of self and other in new ways, challenging negative stereotypes, and expanding our own perceived limitations, we can increase narrative agency and reap all of the personal and collective benefits from so doing.

## 2.3 Identity Weaponization

Identity weaponization is a phenomena connected with the uses and instrumentalization of identity. Identity is a product of memories, myths, collective stories, shared values, traditions and common projects (Smith, 1991: 28-30). It has to do with how people self-identify and perceive themselves as equals or different from others, therefore impacting people's engagement, interaction and exchange with 'the other'. However, identity has a double potential to foster union, solidarity and belonging or to promote exclusion, division and conflict. Mis-uses of identity through manipulation and triggering insecurity, threat or a sense of in/justice might turn it into a powerful weapon for extremists, radicals and populists.

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"Identity Weaponization" - Preventing, Countering and Reversing Identity Division.

Building on Hintjens' analogy of identity being used as a knife (2001), we can describe the practice or process of manipulating identity in order to cause division and harm.

- Weaponizers deliver strategically manipulated cultural information (narratives) that trigger insecurity, threat to self and a sense of in/justice.
- Techniques of identity weaponization include:
  - Narratives of cultural difference that demonize and fear-monger
  - Exclusivist notions of in-group self-identity that justify hostilities in morally absolute terms; and
  - Limiting the cultural concepts, symbols, and narratives that people use to build their sense of self in the world.
  - Explore section 3 "Recognising Techniques of Identity Division" for many examples.

Identifying weaponization techniques helps us understand efforts to prevent, counter and reverse them, and how to design future counter and/or prevention/reversal strategies.

- Alternative narrative creation attempts to engage the brute force of weaponization through (ideally) equally resonant narratives which promote non-divisive self-concepts.

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Such an approach may be called 'Disarmament' as it attempts to reverse weaponization. Other approaches are:

- ○ Immunization (protection against weaponization), and
- ○ Harmonisation (using identity to build peace and cohesion).
- ● An example of a common disarmament counter-technique is to construct inclusive narratives of cultural sameness, or what different groups share.

However, to combat the broad spectrum of weaponization techniques, we need a detailed and dynamic picture of what is being manipulated. The OICD's EMIC Method is designed to achieve this and can be reviewed in section 3 "Applying Strategies in Practice".

- ● Current solutions may not match up to the sophisticated and coordinated approach taken by weaponization itself, nor are necessarily readily available for use by practitioners.

## 2.4 Intercultural Competence

Interculturality is a concept connected with the idea of universalism, multiplicity of perspectives and mutual understanding, whereas competence comprises knowledge, skills and attitudes (Deardorff and Jones, 2012). Intercultural competences relate to what is necessary for us to get along together as humans. Analogously, intercultural *incompetence* can be associated with conflict and even war (UNESCO, 2013: 38).

Intercultural competencies can be defined as the set of skills necessary to gain adequate knowledge about particular cultures and being able to interact while holding receptive attitudes that encourage contact with difference. The main elements necessary to acquire intercultural competencies are "respect, self-awareness/identity, seeing from other perspectives/worldviews, listening, adaptation, relationship building, and cultural humility" (Deardorff, 2020).

There are several steps and activities associated with implementing intercultural competencies. These include clarifying, teaching, promoting and enacting intercultural competencies with specific activities within organizational or societal level actions that could be undertaken under each step. This toolkit's proposals will promote an enhanced framework for acquiring and implementing such competencies.

**Learn more from the [UNESCO Intercultural competences: conceptual and operational framework](#)**

# TOOLKIT CONCEPT SPOTLIGHT

Intercultural Competences – managing cultural diversity to ensure inclusive and sustainable development

Intercultural competences are sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for us to get along together as humans.

The intercultural competences framework entails/promotes:
- Knowledge about other cultures;
- Being able to interact holding receptive attitudes;
- Making open contact with difference.

The main elements to acquire intercultural competences are:
- Respect
- Self-awareness/identity
- Seeing from other perspectives/worldviews
- Listening
- Adaptation
- Relationship building
- Cultural humility

Approaches and tools for applying the intercultural competences framework:
- Formal intercultural learning
  - Educational curriculum at all levels of schooling;
  - Specific short courses focused on particular elements of intercultural competences;
  - Formalized experiential learning opportunities (e.g., job training, studying/working abroad);
- Informal and non-formal learning opportunities
  - Exchanges and daily lived experience;
  - Fine arts (e.g., theater, visual methods, music);
  - Cultural organizations;
  - Public spaces (e.g., museums and libraries)
  - > New Media

## 2.5 Co-creation, Mutual Learning & Sharing

As far as approaches to deal with conflict and peace are concerned, the turn to the 21st century has marked a shift in the international interventionism paradigm. Where once "capacity building" and "knowledge transfer" were paramount, a focus has emerged on the need for tailor-made approaches adapted for different contexts and with the active involvement and participation of local actors.

Some have argued that, besides the universalist bias of international interventionism at the end of the Cold War, the results of any intervention is always a product of unique and differentiated interaction, bringing about the idea that the implementation of the liberal peace approach will always result in hybrid peace forms (Mac Ginty, 2010; Richmond and Mitchell, 2011). This understanding marks an important shift in peace scholarship and practice, leading to a 'local turn' in peacemaking and bringing about the importance of identity, context and history for conflict and its transformation (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013).

While the actions of UN agencies such as UNESCO on the ground in the context of everyday interactions have been marked by this bottom-up approach to peacemaking and hybridism, there still remains a mismatch between these and the top-down efforts towards the settlement of a violent conflict. Calls for a more horizontal approach to peace building which emphasizes co-creation, mutual learning and shared experiences have become more consensual in this context and several organizations (both international and local NGOs) have already started implementing these kinds of activities as part of their peace making portfolio.

The notion of co-creation in policymaking in general has also been inserted into efforts to bridge science, policy and practice, recognizing the virtues, challenges and limitations of each approach, and the need to establish shared understandings and mutual learning procedures through interaction and exchange.

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Co-creation, mutual learning and sharing – a hybrid approach to peacemaking

Five competences are key to promote mutual learning and sharing opportunities:
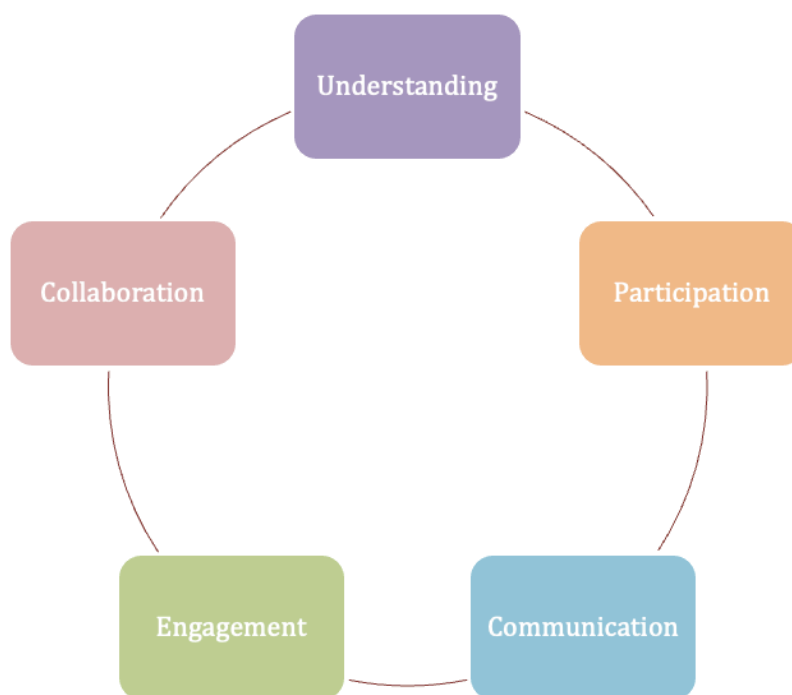
These competences must be applied by all actors and stakeholders involved in a process of peacemaking, whether policymakers, practitioners, researchers, or individuals.

The table below sets out how these competences - their limitations and opportunities - can be conceived from a practitioner's standpoint.

| Understanding | The constraints and limitations associated with policymaking (e.g., time, funds, lack of/poor knowledge of the field) |
|---|---|
| Participating | In the process of co-constructing policy through public consultation, providing evidence and feedback |
| Communicating | Your context, history and struggles, as well as activities, needs and limitations. Make your work visible in an accessible manner |
| Engaging | With existing activities and networks, as well as with academics and policymakers |
| Collaborating | With other CSOs, NGOs, associations and communities to increase the outreach of existing activities. |

Co-creation techniques entail participatory methodologies and online/offline encounters that can foster mutual understanding and shared knowledge, such as, but not limited to:

- Workshops and co-designed/co-tutored training;
- Simulations and gamification strategies focused on promoting awareness of multiple stakeholders' positions, contexts, constraints and possibilities;
- Performance, representation, events (e.g., forum theater, happenings, music festivals, fine arts);
- Communities of practice, online world café, living labs.

## 2.6 Peace, Violence and Conflict

Peace has been traditionally defined as the absence of war. However, this "negative" approach to peace, focusing not on what it is but on what it is not, fails to recognize structural and cultural constraints such as poverty, inequality, lack of access to education and health services, as well as extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and prejudice that might work in the way of impeding the realization of human potential, creating a context of latent conflict with great potential of turning into direct violence (Galtung, 1969).

The expansion of this framework translated into policy is first seen in the United Nations Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1992), which considers the importance of promoting social justice, reparation and redistribution as a means to build sustainable peace. While there is an important evolution in the sense of rendering proactivity to the act of peacemaking, it was still insufficient insofar as the main approach continued that of promoting negative peace in a sequential process that has proven itself to create social detachment (Ricarte, 2023).

The recognition of other dimensions of violence besides direct violence which might even be more lethal with the passing of time but that are clearly the drivers of and legitimizing force for the development of violent conflict and war has brought this debate to a different level. However, the cultural, symbolic or discursive dimension of violence is still mainly marginalized both in scholarship, policy and practice, leaving identity issues at the margins of peacemaking.

As this report will show, many organizations, including UNESCO and the OICD, have attempted to tackle this issue face-on, developing and applying approaches that promote social change through sustainable peace, dealing with memory, narratives, trauma, enmity and difference and aiming to de- and re-construct intersubjective meanings which are built on exclusion, prejudice and negative forms of othering. This approach is key to rethinking peace, violence and conflict and to promote resilient societies, democracy and change.
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# TOOLKIT CONCEPT SPOTLIGHT

*Peace, violence and conflict – a human centered approach*

Traditional approaches to peace, violence and conflict have focused on a state-centric approach that considers peace as the absence of war and violent conflict as detached from identity needs.

A multidimensional approach to violence provides an analytical and practical framework to build sustainable peace from a human centered perspective. Following Johan Galtung's (1969) work, violence can be better understood as a triangle, containing three dimensions:
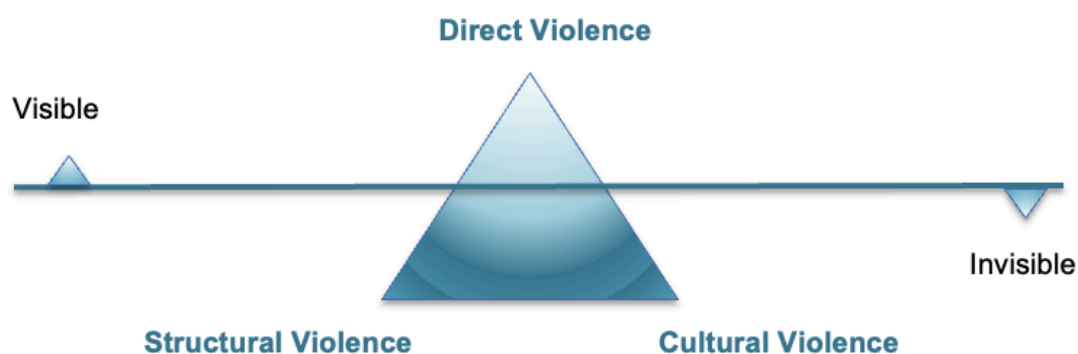


1. Direct violence refers to acts of causing physical injury to another person. It has clear victims and perpetrators. It can be carried out by the state, groups in society or even the family. Examples:
○      Killing
○      Torture
○      Sexual violence
○      Hate crimes

2. Structural violence has to do with institutionalized social injustice and discrimination, leading to the denial of people's rights. It is more well known as the faceless type of violence, since it can be found in the structures of society such as laws, policies, written and unwritten rules, institutional praxis, government authorities, civil society and behavior of individuals. Examples:
○      Denial of access to work, housing, justice and citizenship
○      Racism
○      Misogyny
○      Homophobia

3. Cultural violence is embedded in attitudes, values, beliefs and norms that make structural and direct violence legitimate, acceptable and even inevitable. The roots of violence are connected to the way we think, speak and feel about one another. Cultural narratives of violence can be transmitted in several ways:
○      Ideology
○      Political discourses

## 2.7 Dehumanisation and Reconciliation

The concept of dehumanization in the academic literature is usually employed within postcolonial literature to explain the violence of colonialism and contemporary slavery (Fanon, 1963: 42; Dussel, 1974, 35-36; Levinas, 1998), or by social psychology frameworks to provide analyses of the conditions that allowed for the Holocaust (Malley-Morrison et al., 2013; Lang, 2010; Totten and Bartrop, 2007). The former refers to dehumanization as a type of direct violence (Galtung, 1967), by means of depriving the 'other' from the statute of human being and, therefore being subjected to inhuman conditions such as forced work, slavery, and extermination, while the latter has to do primarily with psychological processes connected with identity and recognition. These frameworks have in common the identification of dehumanization as an intersubjective meaning that is constructed through social interaction and which reflects and informs social practices, actions and policies.

As a feature of identity and othering, dehumanization has been insufficiently explored in literature and, more importantly, has been mostly marginalized in policy. While visible manifestations of dehumanization have become more and more a political issue with associated policy concerns, the less visible traits connected with narratives, meaning making and (mis)representations of the 'other' are still underexplored as a key aspect of social transformations. Generational violence and conflict have the potential of turning dehumanization of the 'other' into a practice embedded into culture, narratives of the past and even part of self definitions. This is because meanings such as enmity can become so

ingrained within a society that it turns into a defining aspect of group relationships in opposition to another in a protracted dispute.

While reconciliation is a framework inserted mainly into post-conflict peacebuilding policies, the question of how narratives can inform, fuel and escalate conflict is oftentimes left unaddressed by policymakers. There is a need to explore the interrelations between dehumanization and reconciliation as a catalyst for social transformation (Ricarte, 2023).

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## TOOLKIT CONCEPT SPOTLIGHT

Dehumanization and reconciliation – coexisting dynamics

Dehumanization and reconciliation are frequently coexisting dynamics in any social conflict scenario, meaning that there exists a double potential for deepening violence or promoting peace.

Dehumanization is a process of othering which entails the denial of basic identity needs such as recognition, agency and community. Dehumanization is connected with misrepresentation, marginalization and alienation of the 'other'.

Reconciliation as the other side of dehumanization has to do with recognition, mutual understanding and acceptance of difference.

Dimensions of dehumanization and peace-less reconciliation

| | | Manifestations | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Dehumanization | Peace-less reconciliation |
| Dimensions | Moral/ cultural | Conflicting narratives about the past, denying identity | Apologies, common moral history education, recognition |
| | Political/ institutional | Official discourse, direct violence, war and militarism | reparation programs, truth commissions (legal response) |
| | Economic | Inequality, lack of access to resources and basic needs | Promote employment, reduce inequality, affirmative actions |
| | Geographic | Restriction of movement, occupation, demolitions | Freedom of access and movement, state recognition |

| | Social | Denying community, rights and access to state services | basic services for individuals forcedly displaced, citizenship |
|---|---|---|---|

(Source: Ricarte, 2023)

The tools outlined in this document aim to provide a pathway to harness the power of identity in social transformation, promoting reconciliation through mutual understanding, legitimization and recognition, thus countering dehumanization.

Tips:
- Identify the narratives, practices, policies and social norms that remove agency, community and identity (use the triangle of violence as example, focusing on the cultural dimensions).
- Identify the narratives, practices, policies and social norms that promote recognition, legitimization and self-determination.
- In combination with tools listed in the next section, attempt to deconstruct shared meanings and practices that promote cultural and structural violence.

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# 3. Tools

## 3.1 Part One: Researching and Analyzing Identity

This section of the toolkit presents examples of methods for researching and analyzing identity in different cultural contexts. These methods can assist practitioners in the practical collecting and processing of identity-related information, as well as in understanding the multiple ways that identity is used to incite fear and division. They can be followed in sequential order or used as stand-alone tools. Several of the approaches are established components of the OICD's EMIC Method (see Toolkit Spotlight).

3.1.1 Discourse Narratives - Exercise Discourse Analysis

3.1.2 Historiography and process tracing

3.1.3 Ethnographic observation and interviewing

3.1.4 Recognizing techniques of identity division

3.1.5 Visualizing identity dynamics - Exercise Identity Maps

## 3.1.1 Discourse and Narratives

After establishing some common features of identity, a key way to understand how identity is used to create division is by analyzing the discourses of those inciting division. This can be conducted as formal discourse analysis, or something less structured. However the discourse is approached, it is important that the chosen sample(s) are broken down into their component concepts and keywords. This process will allow the cultural concepts and narratives used in the divisive efforts to be identified and subsequent analysis to take place.

**Examples of samples to work with:** Speeches, blog posts, media releases, newspaper or media articles, radio transcripts, social media posts or comments.

**Useful Tip:** It may be useful to keep in mind the techniques of division outlined later in this section of the toolkit, and see whether/how they apply to the sample being analyzed.

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# EXERCISE: DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

This exercise is designed to help gather data relevant to identity from a discourse sample. It is designed for groups of 3-6 people.

Preparing the exercise:

- Choose discourse samples that use clear, simple language to structure a cohesive narrative that incites division. Recommended length: 1-2 pages.

Instructions:

- Begin by individually reading the discourse sample provided. Highlight any words and phrases related to identity that seem relevant to you.
- In your group, create a table divided into three columns (see Photo):
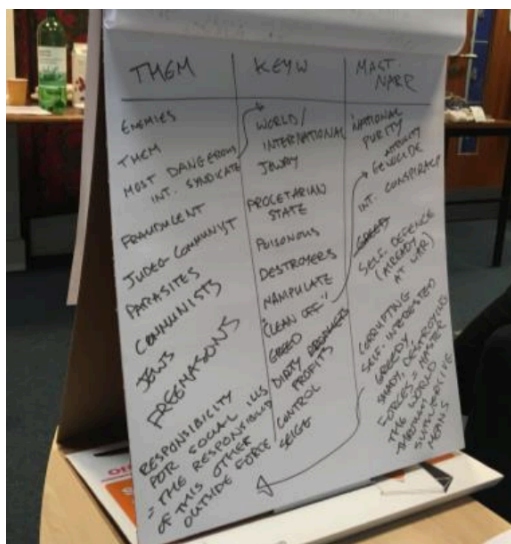


**Left column:** Words that represent an entire group featured in the discourse: e.g. "we", "the people", "they", "those people"

**Middle column:** Keywords and phrases used to describe and characterize the us/them groups in the first column.

**Right column:** Your interpretation of the "master narratives" or main storyline(s) in the discourse. Master narratives should clearly relate to the other columns.

Exercise Insights

- Discourse analysis provides a nuanced understanding of cultural context, revealing specific cultural concepts and symbols being used to create division. Groups may reveal insights related to the use of the following: Gendered language; Geographic positioning; Othering; Familial language; Crisis language; Moral language; Emotional language.
- Look out for whether samples share common formulas and techniques for creating division. See section 2.3 for a list of example techniques.

### 3.1.2 Historiography and Process Tracing

The understanding of how identities (or identity discourses) have influenced conflict, violence and alterity is a powerful tool to deconstruct such discourses, as well as stereotypes, prejudice and enmity. By focusing on the root-causes of conflict through a historical approach, the practitioners gains deeper insight on the processes through which some meanings, stories and traditions have become so ingrained and structured that conflict, enmity and (mis)representations of the 'other' become a central part of one's identity in conflict (Ricarte, 2023: 31-33). While historiography brings about the importance of memory, the past and meaning making through time, process tracing is a qualitative method that attempts to identify causal processes (the causal chain and causal mechanisms), focusing on cause(s) and outcome to unravel the nodal points which have marked conflict narratives.

**How?** To employ historiography and process tracing, the practitioner must acquire a deeper understanding of the context and look back to history to search for key moments which have marked moments of continuity and change in a structured way.

**Examples of samples to work with:** while conflict only develops when groups reproduce them and act accordingly, due to the outreach and legitimizing effect of official and political elites' discourses, one privileged medium to research the root causes of conflict is through the analysis of community, national and international leaders and their speeches/discourse.

**In practice:** a better understanding of the structural dimensions of conflict can give us a bigger picture. However, as has been argued in this toolkit so far (see concepts section), sustainable social transformation must combine top-down efforts with transformation from below. This implies a combination of several smaller initiatives which act within the context of individuals and communities and that, while having a limited outreach in isolation, can provide more powerful transformations and changes that endure.

**Exercises:** several initiatives have been discussed in the workshop that can be applied in an informed way and potentialized by the conscious use of historiography and process tracing. These include, but are not limited to Story Circles, participatory theater, bereaved families forum, arts and crafts activities focusing on expressing identity and difference in a positive way.

### 3.1.3 Ethnographic Observation and Interviewing

Beyond using discourse as a means to assess how identities are structured or expressed in a given context, we can also observe how people act out, or otherwise embody, identity in their daily lives. Social or cultural anthropology resources such as the Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology can provide guidance in conducting such research and analysis. Such resources also introduce a range of methods that can help us build up a picture of how

identity is structured in a given context, through ethnographic interviews and other related conversational and observational techniques.

### 3.1.4 Recognising Techniques of Identity Division

Effective identity-based research and analysis helps to reveal how division is being generated through the use of specific narrative techniques. Interestingly, those who use identity to create division employ remarkably similar narratives and techniques across historical periods and social and cultural contexts. Identifying these techniques as part of the research and analysis phase is an important step in being able to build identity-based strategies, to counter them at a later stage. The discourse exercise in section 2.1 is designed to help generate and reflect on these and other examples.

Techniques for identity division include, but are not limited to:

| Examples of Techniques of Identity Division | |
| --- | --- |
| Crisis Technique | Creates a sense of crisis or rupture within a regional, political or cultural context. |
| Othering Technique | Establishes an "us" group who is morally and otherwise superior and a "them" or "other" group who is inferior. |
| Simplification Technique | Employs common sense language, dichotomies and reductive labels to create one "true version" of history and assigns people fixed characteristics. |
| Shaming Technique | Appeals to the social responsibilities of those being addressed to influence their behavior. |
| Saviour/Hero Technique | Positions the influencer/s as the saviour and only hope for the people being addressed. |
| Obscuring Technique | Uses deliberately vague language to obscure the sources of harm and make it difficult to determine who should be held accountable. |

## Crisis Technique

The crisis technique creates a sense of crisis or rupture within a regional, political or cultural context. It builds on this sense of imminent crisis, making use of a sense of urgency to make the message or narrative convincing. Examples of crisis techniques include:

- **Apocalyptic narratives:** "The world is ending"
- **Survival narratives:** "If we're going to make it, we need to do x"
- **Ticking bomb narratives:** "We're losing time as we speak!"
- **Millenarian narratives:** "The world is changing (often for the worse)."

## Othering Technique

The othering technique establishes an "us" group who is morally and otherwise superior and a "them" or "other" group who is inferior. Because they are inferior, harm or atrocities committed towards them are considered justifiable. Examples of othering techniques include:

- **Dehumanisation:** "They are like animals!" (they don't feel what we feel)
- **Undeservingness:** "They came the wrong way" (i.e., migrants travelling without a visa)
- **Criminalisation:** "They are stealing our jobs"
- **Impurity:** "They are smelly/dirty."

## Simplification Technique

The simplification technique employs common sense language, dichotomies and reductive labels to create one "true version" of history and assign groups fixed characteristics. Examples of simplification techniques include:

- **One truth narrative:** There is only one right way to deal with an issue
- **Linear path narrative:** There is only one way to progress to a better future
- **Common good narrative:** Individual decisions and moral justifications are replaced with a collective will and motivation
- **Homogenising narrative:** "We are all the same as each other, and they are all different to us."

## Shaming Technique

The shaming technique appeals to social responsibilities to influence behaviour. Shaming makes those who it addresses feel as if failing to act would reflect badly on their moral character. Examples of shaming techniques include:

- **Making it personal:** "This will effect your homes, families, and loved ones"
- **Playing the protector:** "They are exploiting your women, you must act"
- **Victimisation:** "You have been excluded, you are weak and powerless—this is how you can fight!"

## Saviour/Hero Technique

The saviour/hero technique positions the influencer/s as the saviour and only hope for the people being addressed. Examples of saviour techniques include:

- **Messianic visionary narrative:** The speaker is the chosen one, anointed to lead the people towards salvation
- **Right to rule narrative:** "It's in our blood"—those trying to influence have the right to rule based on birth, blood, religion, etc.
- **Justice narrative:** "We have been wronged, this is the path to what is right!"
- **Threat narrative:** Constructing a threat that the people need to be saved from
- **Nostalgia narrative:** The past was better and now the present is under threat OR the past was terrible/filled with injustice, the future will be better.

## Obscuring Technique

The obscuring technique uses deliberately vague language to obscure the sources of harm and violence and make it difficult to determine who should be held accountable. Examples of obscuring techniques include:

- **Denial:** The influencer/s deny any involvement in wrongdoing or atrocities committed
- **Misdirection:** Pointing to another issue or problem to deflect from the problem
- **Indirect references to violence:** Glossing over, or using veiled or sanitised language to describe violent action
- **Blaming the victim:** "They asked for it/committed worse crimes."

## 3.1.5 Visualising Identity Dynamics

Methods discussed so far such as discourse analysis and ethnographic observation provide a range of information on how people engage with narratives and their key concepts. Visualizing how these features are structured can be a very useful method to begin to identify links, connections and relationships between concepts, narratives and actors. Identity mapping also provides a critical platform for cohesion-building strategy development

at a later stage, where opportunities to regenerate and connect narrative pathways are revealed.

## Identity Mapping

Identity maps build upon a given discourse analysis to identify the links between keywords, phrases and narratives of division. It is a way of visualizing narratives and discourse that aims to highlight their points of division and potential connection.

**When to use:** In situations where you want to understand how discourses and narratives are being used to create and/or sustain division.

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## EXERCISE: IDENTITY MAPS

This exercise builds on discourse analysis exercises, and is designed for groups of 3-6. The object of the exercise is to visually represent the relationships between narratives, keywords, and us/them group elements of cultural discourse. This can be achieved by drawing lines between the concepts.

### Preparation

- Provide each group with paper, markers, and post-it notes.
- You will need a discourse analysis or other processed data set of identity-related information in order to create a visualization.

### Instructions

- Use the paper provided to map and visualize the discourse analysis you have created.
- Examples of mapping techniques you might incorporate are concept maps (showing key concepts and keywords branching off), mind maps (a hierarchical depiction of concepts and narratives), relational maps (counting the number of references between concepts), and temporal maps (depicting the evolution of concepts). See page 18 for visual depictions of examples.
- One approach to converting a discourse table as a result of the exercise in 1.1, is to place us/them groups (left column of the discourse table) towards the bottom of the piece of butcher's paper. You might cluster these together somewhat into the us/them distinctions using mind mapping techniques that show the relationship between groups (see mind map picture on page 18). For keywords and phrases (middle column), these can be arranged in the middle-upper part of the page and lines can be drawn to illustrate how they are associated to one another and to the us/them groups below.
- The master narrative content of the discourse table (right column) will be represented through the connections you make within and between the elements

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you have placed on the visualization. You can use post-it notes to move around the keywords on the page if you have chosen to use them.

- Present your work to the wider group at the end of the exercise, using the map to explain how identity-based techniques are being used to divide the populations. You will also want to ensure that each master narrative that you identified in the discourse analysis exercise is able to be clearly explained using the map.

Exercise Insights:

- Try to articulate ways in which the visualization exercise has helped to reveal a deeper level of understanding of how narratives and cultural components are being used in the cultural context.
- Recognise the ability for identity maps to be a flexible and dynamic tool for tracking narrative movements, shifts and reassociations.
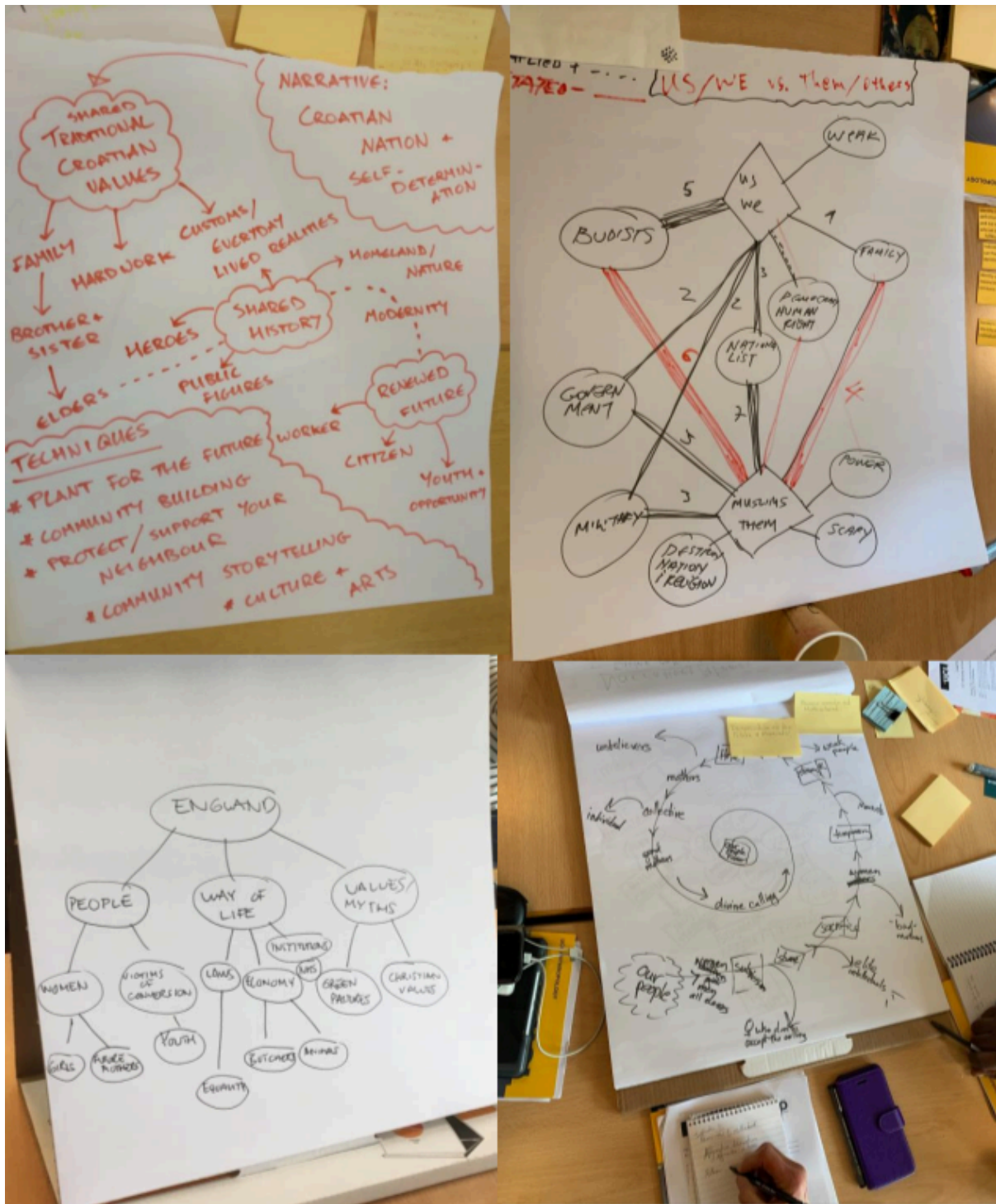
1: Concept map, 2: Relational map, 3: Mind map, 4: Temporal map.

## 3.2 Part Two: Applying Identity to Art for Social Transformation (Strategies)

Part two of this toolkit presents tools for developing and applying identity-based strategies to counter division and build cohesion. The techniques and applications were assembled from a broad range of academic, NGO and artistic expertise, channeling a breadth and diversity of insights into techniques that may assist practitioners in combating division and promoting peace and cohesion through identity in their work.

3.2.1 Exercise: Identity Maps as a Strategy Building Platform

3.2.2 Techniques for Countering Division and Building Cohesion

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### 3.2.1 EXERCISE: IDENTITY MAPS AS A STRATEGY BUILDING PLATFORM

This exercise focuses on understanding how to identify and counter specific divisive techniques using identity maps.

Preparation

- This exercise requires that groups are in possession of identity maps that they are familiar with.

Instructions

- Using the techniques of division that were identified during the discourse exercise in 2.1, use the maps to identify which techniques are in use in the cultural context.
- One approach is to go through each technique in turn, querying the map to see if and how each technique is in force in any way.
- Once a technique has been determined, discuss ways in which the technique could be countered and/or prevented using the key words and concepts on the map.
- Concentrate on countering the technique on the narrative/symbolic level only rather than thinking about intervention design (see next section for techniques that can act as examples).

Exercise insights

- Groups will come up with ways of countering specific techniques of division in their context. These insights can be highlighted as potential strategies and techniques that can be used to counter identity division and build cohesion more broadly (see section below for examples).

| 3.2.2 Techniques of Countering Division and Building Cohesion | |
|---|---|
| **Continuity Technique** | Creates links with the positive elements of a region's or people's past and draws on a sense of tradition to create cohesion in the present. |
| **Bridging Technique** | Creates commonalities and links between groups that have been presented as in opposition, fostering new possibilities for an "us" group. |
| **Agency Technique** | Allows individuals to play a key role in establishing and communicating their own identity. |
| **Dialogue Technique** | Builds upon the potential of effective communication to foster understanding between individuals and groups. |
| **Champion Technique** | Works to find and mobilise individuals and groups who can have a positive influence on a community or identity group. |
| **Challenging Technique** | Seeks to counter or reverse negative/divisive narratives. |
| **Transparency Technique** | The opposite of the obscuring technique of division. Rather than using deliberately vague language to obscure harm, the transparency technique exposes who is causing division. |
| **Multiplication Technique** | The opposite of the simplification technique of division. Instead of employing common sense language, dichotomies and reductive labels, the multiplication techniques expands the options for identity narratives. |

## Continuity Technique

The continuity technique creates links with the positive elements of a region's or people's past. It draws on a sense of tradition to create cohesion in the present. Examples of continuity techniques include:

- **Use of tradition/ritual:** To symbolize elements of historical identity in the present
- **Ancestry narratives:** "We look after our neighbors, as our ancestors did"
- **Familial narratives:** "We are a family, they are our sisters/brothers".

## Bridging Technique

The bridging technique seeks to create commonalities and links between groups that have been presented as in opposition, fostering new possibilities for an "us" group. Examples of bridging techniques include:

- **Scaling up identity:** e.g., Pan West African unity, rather than localized Casamance vs Senegalese identity
- **Finding common characteristics:** Focusing on points of connection with members of the "other" group—such as common interests, gender, generation, religion
- **Fighting shared struggles:** Creating an us group united in the face of shared struggles such as economic hardship, deprivation, environmental destruction.

## Agency Technique

The agency technique allows individuals to play a key role in establishing and communicating their identity. Control over their narrative imparts a sense of ability to find points in common with others. Examples of agency techniques include:

- **Bottom-up approach:** Co-creating identity narratives with the people in question
- **Artistic representations:** Using methods that allow for self-expression of multiple aspects of an individual's identity such as photos, murals, magazines
- **Self-identification:** Strengthening positive associations with identity by allowing individuals choice and control over how their identity is presented
- **Prioritizing lived experience:** Acknowledging a person's individual life history and experiences as a source of knowledge and expertise about their identity. This is especially important in the representation of marginalized or oppressed identities.

## Dialogue Technique

The dialogue technique builds upon the potential of effective communication to foster understanding between individuals and groups. Through creating spaces for dialogue, individuals gain the opportunity to connect and empathize with those who they might consider different from themselves. Examples of dialogue techniques include:

- **Face-to-face connections:** Bringing groups into contact who would otherwise never meet one another

- **Common activities:** Creating spaces for people to work on projects together, ensuring the need for communication, e.g. painting a mural together, cleaning up the community together
- **Safe spaces:** Acting as a neutral facilitator and mediator of dialogue between groups in conflict, fostering a safe space for them to air grievances
- **Engaging the media:** Ensuring that the media does not reinforce harmful or divisive identity narratives by giving a platform to alternative narratives.

## Champion Technique

The champion technique works to find and mobilize individuals and groups who can have a positive influence on a community or identity group. Example of employing the champion technique include:

- **Role models:** Identifying people who can be positive role models for a group of people, acting as influencers for change, e.g., a reformed gang member who can speak to offending youth about how to avoid recidivism
- **Spokespeople:** Finding people who can positively represent a community or identity group to the public and in the media, countering negative portrayals.

## Challenging Technique

The challenging technique seeks to counter or reverse negative or divisive identity narratives. Examples include:

- **Myth-busting:** Providing information and facts to counter incorrect or biased accounts of events (e.g. fake news)
- **Debunking assumptions:** Using knowledge and expertise of a situation, history or population to provide an alternative reading of the source of conflict
- **Providing alternative narratives:** Using positive historical and group identity narratives to present an alternative to negative identity narratives.

## Transparency Technique

The transparency technique is the opposite of the obscuring technique of division. Rather than using language that obscure the sources of harm, the transparency technique exposes who is causing division. Examples include:

- **Naming and shaming:** Pinpointing specific individuals and strategies that have caused division and harm to occur

- **Responsible reporting:** Providing accurate, up-to-date information to the public and the media and discouraging sensationalist or essentializing language
- **Witnessing:** Documenting and gathering evidence on harmful or violent practices.

## Multiplication Technique

The multiplication technique is the opposite of the simplification technique of division. While the simplification technique employs common sense language to create one "true version" of history and assign groups of people fixed characteristics, the multiplication techniques expands the options for identity narratives. Examples include:

- **Both/and:** Allowing people to be *both* one identity *and* another, rather than either/or (e.g., British and Muslim, not British or Muslim)
- **Diverse histories:** Instead of only one account of history or origin, allowing for different accounts of history based on memory and imagination
- **Nuanced language:** Carefully choosing words to reflect the complexity of identity, rather than using buzzwords, stereotypes or rhetoric.

# 3.3 Applying Strategies in Practice

Once we have developed strategies that can target identity-based division, these must be transformed into real world projects. The below examples are from NGO, artist and academic practitioners, and all demonstrate ways in which identity-based strategies can be turned into practical applications to counter division and build peace and cohesion.

These profiles and examples are designed to be updated and added to. If you and/or your organization would like to feature your work in an updated toolkit, kindly fill out this survey.

| Strategies & Applications |
|---|
| **Margaret Nankinga (M ED.) African Languages Week Coordinating Committee (ALWCC) Luganda/Lusoga/Lugwere Vehicular Cross-border Language Commission. Project Literacy R4D** |
| As the Coordinator of the African Languages Week Coordinating Committee (ALWCC) and the Luganda/Lusoga/Lugwere Vehicular Cross-border Language Commission, Ms. Margaret Nankinga has been promoting the use of language as a tool for cultural preservation and |

knowledge storage. Through her work, and that of the organizations she works with, Ms. Nankinga has emphasized the importance of language in conveying traditional values, beliefs, and practices, ensuring that they are not lost in the face of globalization and social change.

One of Ms. Nankinga's notable contributions has been her use of proverbs as a means to regenerate traditional cultural identity and heritage. She has compiled and shared a collection of Luganda proverbs, showcasing their relevance to food security, children's games, and other aspects of daily life. By translating these proverbs and making them accessible to a wider audience, she has helped to preserve and promote traditional wisdom and knowledge as well as build resilience to human challenges.

As a member of the leadership committee of Project Literacy of R4D, she contributed her expertise in language, culture, and literature. Several tools are published through R4D which are relevant to this work such as a [tool to increase parent engagement in children's literacy](#).

Ms. Nankinga's work aligns closely with the broader effort to incorporate identity and art into social transformation. Through using language, culture, and traditional knowledge, through play, translations, proverbs and storytelling, her work and tools demonstrate practical ways in which social transformation can be achieved through identity and art.

Links to Ms. Nankinga's work -
- [A compilation of Luganda proverbs about food and food security](#)
- [Using artificial intelligence (Dall-E) to illustrate Luganda proverbs about children and traditional children games](#)
- [A translation of medical terminologies into Luganda](#), a product jointly produced with members of the Luganda/ Lusoga/Lugwere Commission

Contact Ms. Nankinga
nankingakm@gmail.com

## Nafasi Art Space

Nafasi Art Space, established in 2008, is a contemporary art center located in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Being in its 15th year since inception, Nafasi has evolved into a vibrant hub where studio spaces, residencies, workshops, festivals, exhibitions, and enriching children's activities have fostered unbridled artistic experimentation and expression. It has become a living canvas, reflecting the kaleidoscope of creativity.

One of Nafasi's key initiatives is the Nafasi Academy, which was established in 2020. The academy is an experimental interdisciplinary training program and creative hub for artists and arts practitioners from marginalized backgrounds in Dar es Salaam. The academy aims to create a Tanzania where all voices and perspectives are reflected in culture and art.

The Nafasi Academy is divided into two parts, alternating every other year. The first part is the Nafasi Academy for Contemporary Art, which is a 10-month program that offers studios,

workshops, training, and exhibition platforms to upcoming artists from vulnerable groups, including women, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged youth. The academy actively involves these targeted beneficiaries in the design of studio spaces and the center's programming. The academy aims to improve access to arts and cultural production and education for vulnerable groups, increase dialogue between artists from vulnerable groups, and raise public awareness and understanding of the challenges facing these groups.

The Nafasi Academy for Contemporary Art consists of five modules that cover various aspects of contemporary art and identity. The modules include:

**1. Orientation / Intro to Nafasi Academy & Contemporary Art:** This module introduces the academy and its goals, explores the concept of contemporary art, and discusses the role of art in society.

**2. Global and African Art History, Theory, and Practice:** This module delves into the history and evolution of African and global art, with a focus on how Tanzania fits into local and international narratives of artmaking and visual culture. It also explores the connection between the students' art and the historical conversation.

**3. Research, Concept Development in Contemporary Art:** This module focuses on helping artists develop their artistic ideas and explore different processes and media. It also emphasizes the importance of understanding what has been said on a particular topic before and finding new ways to express it.

**4. Public Art, Activism, Art as Community Engagement:** This module explores the impact of art on society and how it can be used to ask difficult questions, inspire others, raise awareness, and bring about positive change. It also discusses the role of artists as activists and the relationship between art and community engagement.

**5. Professional Development & Entrepreneurship:** This module helps artists turn their knowledge and skills into a professional career. It covers topics such as connecting art to the local and international art scene, applying for residencies and exhibition opportunities, and navigating the challenges and opportunities of being a professional artist.

Through these modules, the Nafasi Academy for Contemporary Art not only provides artistic training but also encourages artists to explore their identities and stories, empowering them to create excellent and original artwork that reflects their unique perspectives.

In addition, the Nafasi Academy for Curatorial Practice and Arts Management is at the forefront of social transformation with its innovative 10-month training program designed for aspiring and practicing curators, events managers, cultural project managers, gallerists, and art writers. In response to the shortage of art managers and curators, coupled with the absence of comprehensive curatorial and art management courses in the Tanzanian art scene, Nafasi has taken the lead in introducing this program. Beyond the realms of theory, management, and practice, the academy is committed to shaping the identity of the local art community and

contributing to profound social transformation. By fostering growth and offering an alternative educational pathway, Nafasi seeks to not only bridge educational gaps but also instigate a positive shift in the identity and dynamics of the Tanzanian art landscape.

In conclusion, Nafasi Art Space, Nafasi Academy for Curatorial Practice and Arts Management, and Nafasi Academy play a crucial role in blending identity and art for social transformation in Africa and beyond. By providing opportunities and resources for artists from marginalized backgrounds, Nafasi promotes inclusivity and diversity in the art world. The academy's modules, which include components on identity and social engagement, help artists develop their artistic voices and contribute to a more just, equitable, and beautiful world through art.

## AfriNov

The African Centre for Sustainable Peace and Non-Violence uses the EMIC Method (see spotlight below) as well as their own arts-based initiatives to achieve the following:-

1) Map the identity factors that are causing problems and negatively affecting communities.
2) Use the resulting Identity Map to diagnose the issues and to decide upon best programming to bring to the community in need.
3) Work with the communities on identifying and finding expression for identity-based issues.
4) Work in codesigning the arts-based ways in which communities can frame and communicate their needs and grievances.

Watch AfriNov's full presentation on the way that they incorporate identity into arts for social change across their programming in East Africa.

## Darla Deardorff and UNESCO

Story Circles is an innovative method that combines storytelling and intercultural dialogue to foster social transformation.

**1. Background:**
Story Circles have a long history in various cultural communities around the world, including Africa. They draw on the power of storytelling, a social and cultural activity deeply rooted in all cultural traditions, to share personal narratives and create connections among participants. By embracing diverse identities and experiences, Story Circles provide a platform for individuals to explore their own identities and understand others'.

**2. Methodology:**
Story Circles involve gatherings of three or more people who share personal experiences within a safe and respectful environment. Participants are encouraged to share stories from their own lives, which can be joyful, painful, or transformative. Through active listening and open dialogue,

Story Circles create opportunities for individuals to reflect on their identities and engage with others' stories.

**3. Revealing Identities:**
Story Circles serve as a catalyst for revealing and expressing identities in several ways:

a) Validation and Perspective: By sharing personal experiences, participants validate their own perspectives and gain insights into the experiences of others. This process allows individuals to recognize the uniqueness of their identities and appreciate the diversity of human experiences.

b) Vulnerability and Empathy: Story Circles encourage participants to be vulnerable and authentic in sharing their stories. This vulnerability fosters empathy among participants, as they connect emotionally with each other's experiences and develop a deeper understanding of different identities.

c) Reflection and Self-Awareness: Engaging in Story Circles prompts individuals to reflect on their own identities, values, and beliefs. Through the process of storytelling and active listening, participants gain self-awareness and a deeper understanding of how their identities shape their perspectives and interactions with others.

**4. Artistic Expression:**
Story Circles also incorporate artistic elements, such as creative writing, visual arts, or performance, to enhance the expression of identities. Artistic mediums provide additional avenues for participants to explore and communicate their identities, allowing for a more nuanced and multi-dimensional understanding of self and others.

**5. Social Transformation:**
The blending of identity and art in Story Circles contributes to social transformation in several ways:

a) Building Bridges: Story Circles create connections and build bridges between individuals from diverse backgrounds. By sharing stories and engaging in dialogue, participants develop a sense of shared humanity, fostering understanding and empathy across cultural, social, and political divides.

b) Challenging Stereotypes: Story Circles challenge stereotypes and biases by providing a platform for individuals to share their authentic experiences. This process humanizes different identities and challenges preconceived notions, leading to greater acceptance and respect for diversity.

c) Empowering Marginalized Voices: Story Circles amplify the voices of marginalized individuals and communities, allowing them to reclaim their narratives and challenge dominant narratives. This empowerment contributes to social justice and equity by giving voice to those who have been historically silenced.

**Conclusion:**

Story Circles, with their emphasis on blending identity and art, offer a transformative approach to social change. By revealing and expressing identities, this method fosters understanding, empathy, and social cohesion. Story Circles have the potential to contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society by celebrating diversity and promoting dialogue across cultures and identities.

A detailed and open source publication [available in the UNESCO digital Library](#) covers the methodology in full.

## Culturans

Culturans recognize the power of identity and arts in creating social transformation. They understand that identity plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' perceptions, narratives, and values, and that arts can be a powerful tool for self-expression, community engagement, and fostering empathy and understanding.

Culturans, as an NGO, uses art, innovation, and culture to create community-based, sustainable urban futures. They work with grassroots communities, academic and scientific research institutions, and government agencies in multiple countries. Culturans believe that cities are human spaces built on the interactions of their citizens, and they aim to develop solutions that respond to and empathize with the everyday lives of local communities. They also emphasize the importance of adopting a global perspective, where cities learn from each other, cooperate, and act together to build value from both unity and difference.

To create social transformation, Culturans and the OICD have developed the 'IMPACT' approach. This approach combines human identity research and mapping with art-driven civic engagement and innovation. It uses collective and local identity integration as both a creative process and outcome. By exploring different perspectives on inner and inter-group identity structures and the root causes of urban challenges, IMPACT aims to strengthen personal and collective connections and open up a shared imagination to transform conflict into creative opportunities and outcomes.

The implementation of this approach involves a three-step experience for young people from different cities and cultures. First, an experiential 'Creative Citizens School' builds skills in art, research, and innovation, as well as tools for mapping identity structures and understanding place-based issues. This step also strengthens team bonds with a shared sense of mission. Second, an 'Impact Forum' on the future of cities allows participants to explore different perspectives on common urban problems and internal and external identity structures, generating visionary ideas and world views. Finally, an 'Art & Identity Urban Incubator' empowers specialist roles in a team context, enabling ideas to be transformed into concrete, collective, and innovative public art, urban regeneration, and entrepreneurial projects. These projects are supported by powerful evidence-based advocacy campaigns.

Culturans and the OICD believe that their arts-driven innovation approach provides young citizens with a wide range of artistic expressions and creative tools to imagine and experiment with solutions. By using the power of visual and performing arts, technology, design, and architecture, combined with evidence-based identity strategies, they aim to create meaningful, impactful, and stunning projects that contribute to social transformation.

Through their various existing programs, such as the TRYCITIES edition and the Hólosciens edition, Culturans have demonstrated their commitment to recognizing and implementing an understanding of identity and arts in creating social transformation. These programs have brought together diverse groups of young people, communities, researchers, artists, and professionals to address urban challenges, reimagine public spaces, and promote healthy cities. By integrating identity research, art-driven civic engagement, and innovation, Culturans are working towards building a more inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable urban future.

Watch Culturans' full presentation on the way that they incorporate identity into arts for social change across their global programming. Read more about Culturans work at their website.

## Sun Rays Foundation

The Sun Rays Foundation believes that understanding identity and cultural heritage factors is crucial for fostering peaceful coexistence and promoting social change. Through various initiatives, Sun Rays Foundation actively works towards harnessing the potential of identity and arts to bring about positive transformation in communities.

One of the key ways in which Sun Rays Foundation implements an understanding of identity and arts is through its focus on fostering cultural harmony and peaceful coexistence. The foundation emphasizes the importance of promoting cultural cohesion between returning individuals and local communities. It recognizes that understanding and appreciating different cultures can help bridge divides and build stronger relationships. Sun Rays Foundation works towards orienting refugee communities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) about the culture of the host communities, facilitating a deeper understanding and respect for each other's identities.

Another important aspect of Sun Rays Foundation's work is youth mentorship and cultural understanding. The foundation provides mentorship to young people from South Sudan who are residing abroad in countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Through this mentorship program, the foundation aims to help these young individuals grasp the history and intricate cultures of South Sudan's people. By empowering them with knowledge and understanding, Sun Rays Foundation enables them to become ambassadors of peaceful coexistence in their respective locales.

Sun Rays Foundation also recognizes the role of arts in promoting social transformation. The

foundation actively engages with the community to preserve South Sudan's diverse cultures and heritage. It collaborates with the Azande King and community leaders to organize cultural events that convey specific messages to the community. These events not only celebrate the richness of South Sudan's cultural practices but also serve as platforms for dialogue and understanding. By engaging and educating the community on specific cultural practices, Sun Rays Foundation promotes cultural heritage preservation and fosters a sense of pride and identity among community members.

In addition to cultural initiatives, Sun Rays Foundation also addresses social issues through community-based initiatives. The foundation leverages the role of traditional leaders and community point persons in advancing gender equality and equity within communities. It actively works towards addressing social issues such as early marriages and teen pregnancies, which can hinder the development and empowerment of individuals, particularly young girls. By collaborating with community leaders and implementing community-based initiatives, Sun Rays Foundation aims to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Furthermore, Sun Rays Foundation recognizes the need to rehabilitate former militia recruits, particularly young boys and girls who have been recruited into militia groups. The foundation provides psychosocial support and offers a safe haven for these individuals, isolating them from the harmful influences of the militia groups. Sun Rays Foundation also collaborates with local authorities to facilitate their temporary stay and eventual reunification with their families. By providing support and rehabilitation, the foundation aims to reintegrate these individuals into society and help them rebuild their lives.

In summary, Sun Rays Foundation recognizes and implements an understanding of identity and arts to create social transformation. Through its various initiatives, the foundation fosters cultural harmony, promotes cultural understanding among youth, engages with communities to preserve cultural heritage, addresses social issues, and rehabilitates former militia recruits. By harnessing the power of identity and arts, Sun Rays Foundation strives to create a more inclusive, harmonious, and empowered society.

Read more about the work of Sun Rays Foundation at their website.

## Centre for People Development

C4PD works to improve learning outcomes (in reading and socio emotional skills) among lower primary grade 1-4 school children. The implementation strategy of the project is to work with the communities, school level actors and education managers at the County and Sub County level to improve the adoption of art and play-based pedagogy for enhanced quality of literacy instruction and positive learner-centered experience at school; and to support home/community level actors (such as elders, caregivers, parents, CSOs, and volunteers) to create stimulating home learning environment that reinforces school level efforts and remove barriers to education for pupils. Both strategies engage children, teachers, school leaders, parents, elders, school management committees (SMC) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs), County and

sub-County level education officials, teacher trainers/coaches/mentors, and national level agencies under the Ministry of Education of Kenya.

**Elder-Teacher Knowledge Transfer**

Traditionally the Luo community used to have a practice known as `Siwindhe` where young people especially girls were taught at night. This practice stopped. The C4PD program is coming up with the same style where the elderly women and men teach identified early childhood teachers our culture and traditional practices. This is aimed at transferring the same knowledge to the pupils. This improves the teacher's professional development as they are trained on play-based learning (PBL) teaching practices to enhance children's literacy and socio emotional skills for inclusivity.

**Early childhood education in mother tongue**

The C4PD have mobilized the local preschool and nursery schools to offer Literacy and numeracy in the mother tongue - the Luo. Teaching the learners in their mother tongues for the first 4 years of their schooling improves performance, interest and retention in school. The first days in schools have more appeal to learners if they are spoken to in a familiar language. We have sessions where parents are encouraged to talk to their children in their mother tongue at home as much as possible.

**Storytelling through riddles and proverbs**

Communities that C4PD works with have a very rich culture in riddles and proverbs usually featuring naturally occurring plants and animals like the Hare, Hyena, Crocodiles, Snakes, Eagle, Spider and plants Baobab, Circus and Mango trees just to name a few examples. These proverbs and riddles are used after-school to supplement learning activities at the community and household level.

**Using forms of play such as games, sport, poetry, performance, dance art and music to engage children and promote integration**

The targeted schools create lasting impact and empower children with the knowledge and skills to drive change in their lives, their families and their communities through games, sport, poetry, performance, dance art and music that engage children. Teachers organize pupils into clubs that perform games, poetry, dance, music and songs. These provide supplemental and also after-school learning opportunities for children: examples include after-school reading clubs, dancing clubs, community reading centers, reading competitions, and also equipping caregivers with skills and resources for creating stimulating home literacy - Siwindhe. We provide additional educational inputs such as reading materials, grade-appropriate story books, teacher manuals, other teacher and learning materials in poetry, classroom infrastructure is decorated with talking arts/points.

Through these activities, C4PD projects contribute to achieving SDG 4, ensuring 'inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all', including its underlying principle of 'leave no one behind' it brings the community together.
Read more about C4PD at their website.

## John Johnston, artist and art educator (ArtEz University and UNESCO PI)

Dr Johnston is a visual artist and arts educator, who has been exploring the **role of art in promoting understanding across identity divides.** For example, Dr Johnston worked with two groups of Protestant and Catholic youth, who had a friend who was murdered as a result of sectarianism. Each group was asked to paint using imagery they associated with the other group, to whom they were opposed. They were then brought together for a weekend to work on a mural. They spent time talking to each other and as a result they painted a new picture, and they talked about the words and images that caused division. In the process, they rewrote their identities, painting over the representations of the images about "the other" and producing a new, integrated whole where Protestant and Catholic imagery worked in harmony.

[Read a full work outlining a range of such work by Dr. Johnston](#).

## OICD - Identity Literacy and Teacher Education Programs

## Summary:

Identity Literacy formalizes best educational practices around how to navigate key questions of identity: Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? By incorporating research from around the world into educational practice, we can better help children and young adults explore a wide range of identities and enable agency in how they express themselves.

Understanding the components which make you who you are gives children the ability to understand what drives other people and helps overcome challenges in human relationships. By cultivating identities that are evolving dynamically, children can acquire the ability to critically assess the narrow self-image that is transmitted by the media and other sources.

## What is Identity Literacy?:

Identity Literacy can be described as three fundamental abilities
1. **Integrate:** the ability to critically incorporate the cultural knowledge we encounter (e.g. in school texts and media) into our developing sense of who we are.
2. **Reflect:** the ability to identify how our personal and group identities drive our behaviours, choices, and attitudes towards others.
3. **Adapt:** the ability to adapt and change personal and group identities to overcome challenges, resolve conflicts, manage prosocial relationships, and self-actualise

Benefits include:
- Promotes a sense of belonging and inclusivity by recognizing and valuing diverse identities within the classroom, where pupils feel safe to express themselves and engage in meaningful discussions.
- Encourages exploration of who we are and what we can become, thereby increasing resilience, optionality and capacity for self-actualisation.

- By incorporating children's identities and interests into the curriculum, educators can make the educational content connect to pupils' lives and experiences, enhancing active participation and overall learning outcomes for children.
- Enable early identification of children at risk and strategic allocation of resources to protect and mitigate risks.
- Allow schools to build nuanced and contextual parent communication strategies and other community cohesion initiatives.

Identity literacy increases the number of ways children can answer the question 'Who am I?' by helping children understand that their sense of self, or identity, is not fixed or predetermined. It allows for self-discovery and growth by exploring and experimenting with the different aspects which make you who you are. Numerous studies have shown that this increases confidence, resilience, and the ability to navigate and adapt to different social situations. Indeed, the global educational trend is to nurture pupils with the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

By engaging with diverse identities and perspectives, children learn to question stereotypes, challenge biases, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them. This critical awareness can help them make informed choices about their identity and resist societal pressures to conform to narrow norms or divisive narratives.

Contact info@oicd.net for more information on the identity literacy program.

## OICD - EMIC Method

Many of the toolkit methods above are derived from and/or reinforce aspects of the OICD's Engagement Methodology for Identities in Conflict (EMIC). The EMIC Method is an evidence-based tool that utilizes the positive potential of identity to combat division, reduce the risk of extremism, and create lasting positive change. Its key strength is in identifying and highlighting positive and protective identity factors that combat division.

EMIC works to counter and mitigate division through identity engagement that sets out to:
1. Amplify and regenerate self-other linkages
2. Re-pluralise in-group membership.
3. Protect and expand narrative optionality and the diversity of self-society linkages.

The EMIC Method provides a toolset that consists of six stages and a workflow that is designed to delineate, track and counter techniques of division. The EMIC Method begins by gathering detailed data on a population's use of cultural symbols and narratives. This data is plotted and modeled (mapped) in accordance with the latest knowledge on identity dynamics.

An EMIC practitioner then proceeds to analyze and to develop and test strategies that counter root causes of division. EMIC strategies are distributed in the form of capacity building initiatives and interventions.

The focus of EMIC is to regenerate cultural connections that allow people to build on their unique skill sets and interests and increase their options to find a diverse set of ways to express their personalities within their cultural environment. Rather than returning clients to a state of neutrality, EMIC aims to create solutions that provide populations with narrative optionality, assuming that significant narrative loss has (or is at risk of) occurring as a result of division and identity weaponization.

Contact info@oicd.net to find out about partnership and training opportunities and to learn more about EMIC.

# **EMIC** Workflow

## 1 RESEARCH

An interdisciplinary method exposes key identity based dynamics amongst the target population(s).

## 2 MAPPING

A unique modelling system catalogues how divisive images, narratives and symbols are utilized.

## 3 ANALYSIS

A systematic interrogation and interpretation of the Stage Two Mapping data.

## 4 STRATEGY

Processing of the Stage Three Analysis to reveal and test prospective solutions to the identity divisions.

## 5 SOLUTION

Pretested intervention solutions are tailored and operationalized within the specific context

## 6 EVALUATION

Solutions are retested and evaluated creating results-based action plns

# 4. Recommendations

1. In further developing the framework and tools for use in identity-based programming, a broad engagement with policymakers, employers, and educators is necessary.

   ☐ **Recommendation - A further workshop series is designed (potentially alongside or as part of an existing Arts Education Programme) which brings together stakeholders and has specific remits to integrate the inputs and meet the needs of these stakeholders.**

2. The evaluation of frameworks and tools as they operate within a field-based practice context is an important next step. This would include ways to measure social norms, attitudes, and behaviors such as community surveys, and longitudinal methods to follow up with people in focus groups etc. to see whether and how change occurs.

   ☐ **Recommendation - A research programme is designed and commissioned to investigate, evaluate and compare the efficacy of field-based tools.**

   ☐ **Recommendation - A research programme is designed and commissioned to test the efficacy and improve and publish impact measurement tools.**

3. Developing good practice guidelines for identity-based programming is essential in order to mitigate the associated risks.

   For example -
   1. In addition to practitioners employing techniques of cohesion, it is crucial to acknowledge and attempt to mitigate the structural factors - such as historical factors and economic constraints - which cause divisive identity narratives to continually recur and gain traction.
   2. A robust set of ethical guidelines are compiled and published which provide a comprehensive risk-management knowledge base specific to the unique challenges and opportunities of identity-based practice.

   ☐ **Recommendation - This toolkit is expanded to include a more comprehensive section on risks and ethics related to identity-based practice. Other sections are also expanded upon to develop clear case study material for each practice.**

   ☐ **Recommendation - Training Programs for Policymakers, Educators, Artists and Civil Society are co-developed using this toolkit and the network partners as central starting resources.**

4. Developing mechanisms for tracing, supporting and upscaling existing local initiatives and introducing them formally and in a structured way into policy frameworks as part of

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a broader approach to social transformation is key to allow for their sustainability and outreach beyond local communities and isolated spaces.

☐ **Recommendation - The above recommendations are supported and actioned by relevant authorities and stakeholders.**

# 5. References

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# Appendix

Important and relevant UNESCO resources:

- [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO, 2001](#)
- [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO, 2005](#)
- [Intercultural competences: conceptual and operational framework, UNESCO, 2013](#)
- [Manual for developing intercultural competencies: story circles, UNESCO, 2020](#)
- [UNESCO Report We need to talk: measuring intercultural dialogue for peace and inclusion](#)
- [UNESCO Framework on Culture and Arts Education](#)
- [Revision of the 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms](#)

Results of the workshop stakeholder's survey - presentation by Chikara Shimasaki

https://youtu.be/bKav7osJbQc?si=0ZUe3wNJOpLRuvNN&t=208

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